

CORPORATE
INVOLVEMENT
IN EDUCATION

THINK COLLEGE EARLY PROGRAMS

college readiness

"By 18 years of age, all
students will be prepared for
and able to afford college."

The Seven Priorities of the U.S. Department of Education

CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Sustaining profits in the new economy with its technological sophistication and increased global competition, means that businesses need highly skilled and well-educated workers, making businesses major stakeholders in the educational success of our children. Preparing children in America for college—academically and financially—as well as encouraging all children to aim for a college degree, will help ensure that the knowledge workers businesses need will be available to them over this next century.

Recent studies from the U.S. Department of Education show that students who take academically demanding coursework in high school are more likely to go on to college, succeed and earn more in the workforce, regardless of their financial status, race, or gender. However, disadvantaged students often are not aware of the critical need to take rigorous academic courses to prepare for college, like algebra in middle school or chemistry, physics, and trigonometry in high school, or of the availability of financial aid to pay for college. Moreover, high-achieving students from low-income families are five times as likely not to attend college as those high-achieving students from high-income families. By investing today in all children's preparation for college, businesses are investing in their long-term success.

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PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

One avenue for corporate involvement in college preparation is through the Department's Think College Early campaign. Businesses can partner in GEAR UP grants with schools to leverage their education efforts in the community.

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grants are designed to help children who are disadvantaged prepare themselves to go to college and meet the challenges they will encounter working in the 21st century.

GEAR UP is based on the experience of existing programs that have demonstrated their success and have helped raise expectations to ensure that all children are well prepared for college. This competitive grant program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, supports early college preparation and awareness activities at both the local and the state levels. These grants support programs that begin early and follow entire grades of students over time; challenge all students to have high expectations; involve parents; provide mentoring, tutoring, and information about college; and often provide scholarships for students with need.

"Without efforts like GEAR UP, many young people and their families wouldn't have the information to prepare a game plan—academically and financially—for their future. They'd never realize college could be a real possibility."

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

Examples of Businesses Working in GEAR UP Partnerships

Partnering with Schools for Funding

Businesses with an interest in helping prepare children and increase the college-going rates among low-income youth may consider partnering with local schools to help them apply for Department of Education funding. This initiative awards multi-year grants to locally designed partnerships between colleges and low-income middle schools, plus at least two other partners—such as community organizations, businesses, religious groups, state education agencies, parent groups, or non-profits. To be most effective, partnerships will leverage resources to promote the following proven strategies:

- Informing students and parents about college options and financial aid, including providing students with a 21st Century Scholar Certificate — an early notification of their eligibility for financial aid;
- Promoting rigorous academic coursework based on college entrance requirements;
- Working with a whole grade-level of students in order to raise expectations for all students; and
- Starting with sixth- or seventh-grade students and continuing through high school graduation with comprehensive services, including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and other activities such as after-school programs, summer academic and enrichment programs, and college visits.

Another way businesses can support greater college preparation is to help expand Advanced Placement opportunities for all students through the U.S. Department of Education's Advanced Placement Incentive Program. This program provides schools with additional resources for teacher training programs and on-line course development.

Pathways to Success is a partnership between the University of Kansas, Topeka public schools, and Hewlett Packard that reaches out to economically disadvantaged students in three middle and two high schools to implement an aggressive school reform program. The International Telementor Center will provide assistance with teacher recruitment, Web-based training of telementors, matching students with mentors, monitoring the program through checkpoint forms submitted by students, and providing program evaluation results.

The Lancaster's Partnership GEAR UP project is a collaboration between the school district of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Millersville University, Education Trust, eleven businesses (including: Pepsi Cola, First Union, and Pepperidge Farms), two churches (Faith Tabernacle and Ebenezer Baptist Church), and Franklin and Marshall's America Counts Program. This project extends a very successful college preparation model at McCaskey High School to the middle school level. The project focuses on preparing middle school students academically for postsecondary education after high school by providing them mentoring and tutoring services. In addition, this project provides parents with mentoring and tutoring in academic areas as well as a wide variety of other services, so that they may assist with their children's learning.

Partnership for Successful Students (PSS) is building on its successful Principal Scholars Program. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has teamed with the Future Teachers of Chicago, Crown, Ryder, Calumet, and Westinghouse to assist four schools in raising math and reading scores, as well as graduation rates. The partners have developed individualized student performance records to track progress and provide tutoring and mentoring support, college counseling, and teacher development programs to achieve the partnership's goals.

"Better Education Is Everybody's Business"

Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

If you are interested in learning more
about college preparation, GEAR UP
or Advanced Placement Incentive
programs, please call the Corporate
Outreach Office at (202) 205-8599
or visit our Web site:
www.ed.gov/OIIA/OIA.



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